

Children's Liturgy guide

First Sunday of Lent (Year A)

Gospel: Matthew 4:1-11

The Gospel reading on this first Sunday of Lent takes us right back to Jesus being tested by the devil for 40 days. Jesus' deep trust in God, the Father, and His knowledge of Scripture enabled Him to resist the devil's temptations.

Lent allows us the time to reflect on Jesus' fasting and to recognise that He was able to resist temptation because He was close to the Father. It's a time for us to dedicate more time to being closer to God in prayer, through abstinence and in responding to the needs of those facing injustice.

It's a time to go deeper with God – and the challenge is to keep that going after Lent!

Sharing Scripture – Matthew 4:1-11

Scripture is very powerful, and Jesus proves this in this passage. He uses Scripture from the book of Deuteronomy to withstand the devil's temptations. This is a lesson all on its own, that by remembering bits of Scripture, it can help us in all our lives.

Before the session, print off the words that the devil speaks, and print off the words that Jesus speaks (you can also have a couple of Bibles ready to save printing). Give the role of the devil and Jesus to two confident readers. As you read the whole passage, ask the two readers to jump in and speak at the appropriate time in their role. In doing this, you create a more memorable presentation of Scripture while still staying true to its meaning.

Ask the following questions to help the children immerse themselves in the passage and to bring it to life for them:

1. If you had nothing to eat for days and days, even weeks, how would you respond to someone offering you food and asking to deny your faith? Would it be easy to resist?
2. If you were offered a position of power over a country or the world where you could change things for good, would you give up on your faith? Could or would you resist?
3. Do you know Scripture well enough to help you in times of temptation?

Make the following points to the children:

1. The Bible tells us that the devil had been tempting Jesus for 40 days, and that Jesus had not eaten in this time!
2. Jesus is the Son of God, but he was also human and felt things.
3. He was very hungry, tired and worn out. It would have been very tempting to take some bread, to get out of the situation, or to call His Father to rescue Him.
4. Jesus showed that by knowing Scripture (known as spiritual food) he was able to withstand the devil's temptations.

Read the following to the children

SCIAF stands for Scottish Catholic International Aid Fund – and SCIAF is part of the Catholic Church in Scotland. For over 50 years, SCIAF has been responding to injustice and working with partners across the world to empower people and bring about lasting change. We put pressure on governments to care for the planet and create a fairer, more peaceful world.

During Lent, many Catholics support the work of SCIAF by praying and by donating money via their WEE BOX, or by doing a sponsored event. Millions of people have been helped to grow their own food, set-up their own businesses, or helped to stand again through emergency relief after disasters strike. While injustice continues and families suffer, SCIAF – with your help – will continue to show compassion and respond.

Fasting is a choice for us, and we should consider this to bring us closer to God. Going without food for days or surviving on very little is not a choice for many of our sisters and brothers around the world, and climate change is forcing people to go without food.

Respond

As a group, list the different ways that we can be tempted to do wrong. Don't minimise any of the children's temptations but create a list that they can see. Talk about them before making it clear that, just like Jesus resisted temptation, we too can be helped by God and by learning Scripture.

Download and read the short story of Ruth and Aggrey and learn about how SCIAF, with our partner Caritas Kabwe, has helped.

Conclude the session by saying the WEE BOX prayer together.

Loving Father,

You have given us an abundance through your creation,
yet many go hungry.

Forgive us for excluding our sisters and brothers from their share,
and help us to see each other in the light of the Gospel.

Help us to live in the way you want us to live.

To love our neighbour, to show mercy and to act in solidarity.

We ask this in the name of Jesus, our Lord.

Amen

Scottish Catholic International Aid Fund

SCIAF is the official relief and development agency of the Catholic Church in Scotland and a proud member of the Caritas family. 7 West Nile Street, Glasgow G1 2PR. Tel: 0141 354 5555. Scottish Charity No: SC012302. Company No: SC197327.

